



MESSAGE FROM CHIEF BRADSHAW

Significant layers of “systems” function independently and overlap when necessary to prevent and respond to various levels of crime and violence in our community. They are well integrated in Polk County. The criminal justice system, the mental health system, and Des Moines Public Schools all interact through training and practical experience, resulting in a strong, effective partnership.

Any approach to diminishing our community’s risk for gun violence in its schools and public venues must focus comprehensively on strengthening these systems. Adequate funding determines whether a system has the resources to train, prevent, and respond to individuals and events that threaten public safety. Unbalanced funding among the systems creates inefficiencies and puts our community at risk for such violent events.

The recommendations generated in this report call for tightening federal and state gun laws, prohibiting assault weapons, allowing Sheriffs greater access to an individual’s pertinent information on background checks, providing adequate funding for school infrastructure, additional School Resource Officers, and adequate funding for county mental health systems.

Currently, the State of Iowa is transitioning its funding for mental health systems from a county to a regional system. Counties are weighing their options to determine how to partner with neighboring counties or request an exemption and go it alone. State funding to the regional mental health systems must be adequate to support Iowa’s needs. It is hoped that greater access to mental health services will be created for rural Iowans suffering from mental illness.

Research indicates that more than half of the mass shooters have not been in the criminal justice system prior to their violent act. Most have a history of mental illness. In the urban environments with greater volumes of people, it is important to continue to adequately fund the mental health services that impact the community’s ability to provide core plus services.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy A. Bradshaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Judy" on the top line and "A. Bradshaw" on the line below it.

Judy A. Bradshaw
Chief of Police